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TAGS: PGOV PREL PBTS KDEM MOPS SU
SUBJECT: DEMARCATON OF ABYEI BOUNDARY REMAINS FROZEN

REF: A) KHARTOUM 862 B) KHARTOUM 1135 C) KHARTOUM 1174 D) KHARTOUM 2034

¶11. (SBU) Summary. On November 5, Poloff spoke with Kwol Biong (SPLM), Deputy Chair of the Abyei Border Demarcation Committee, who said that no physical demarcation of the Abyei border has occurred. Biong said that security issues are the committee's primary concern, but also complained of insufficient equipment and the lack of an oversight committee. In an October 29 meeting with CDA Whitehead, Al Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed (NCP), Abyei point-person for the Government of Sudan (GoS), admitted that neither the National Congress Party (NCP) nor the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have formed a joint task force to disseminate the PCA decision as agreed in the trilateral talks. On November 5, Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Mayak Monyotoc (SPLM) told CDA Whitehead that he has not received the budget promised by Khartoum. End Summary.

¶12. (SBU) The six member Abyei Border Demarcation Committee was formed by Presidential decree on August 27, in furtherance of the points of agreement signed by the SPLM and the NCP on August 14th. The Committee was given thirty days to demarcate the boundary of Abyei as described by the July 22 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague (Ref A). To date, however, Biong said the demarcation team has not physically demarcated any of the Abyei boundary, though it has done some reconnaissance of the proposed boundary via helicopter.

¶13. (SBU) Biong said that demarcation team has been unable to work because of security issues. Large numbers of Misseriya, an Arab tribe in Southern Kordofan who migrate through Abyei with their cattle during the dry season, see Abyei's demarcation as a threat to their livelihoods. Elements of the Misseriya have rejected the PCA decision and threatened violence against demarcation efforts (Ref B). Biong said that the team has already been subject to threats and intimidation by local Misseriya while in the field. Biong said that this situation is made intolerable because half of Abyei's Joint Integrated Unit (JIU), tasked with providing security to the demarcation team, is Misseriya. In the event of a security incident, Biong states that it is unclear whether the Misseriya JIU members will protect the demarcation team. In addition, Biong says that the protection team is currently limited to 100 members, but that a larger force is called for given the large number of Misseriya currently migrating into Abyei.

¶14. (SBU) Biong stated in the coming days the team would attempt to construct the two pillars demarcating the southern corners of the Abyei boundary. He said, however, that until the team is provided with soldiers from outside the local community to provide security, the team will not attempt to work on the northern portion of the Abyei border, as this area is already occupied by Misseriya.

¶15. (SBU) Biong noted that other issues, described in an October 9 letter to Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Vice President Riek

Machar, written by the SPLM members of the committee, continue to be a hinderance (Ref C). Biong stated that the team has not been provided with equipment sufficient for the task, including any kind of digging machinery to install the pillars and posts that will demarcate the boundary. (Note: The Government of Sudan (GoS) has provided at least one helicopter to the committee which the committee planned to use on November 5, both because of security issues and given that the terrain is still too wet for normal vehicles. End Note.) Biong also noted that his technical committee still lacks an oversight committee as called for by the Points of Agreement. (Note: The GoS maintains that an oversight committee is unnecessary, as the demarcation of the Abyei boundary is strictly a technical task. End Note.) Instead, without the consent of the SPLM, responsibility for coordinating administrative and security issues rests with Sami Bushara (NCP), as administrative secretary of the committee. Biong stated that Bushara is carrying out his duties in a manner calculated to frustrate the team.

¶6. (SBU) In an October 29 meeting with CDA Whitehead, GoS Abyei point-person Al Dirdiri Mohamed Ahmed (Ref. D) admitted that neither the NCP nor the SPLM have formed a joint task force to disseminate the PCA decision as agreed in the trilateral talks. (Comment. Ironically, the only official on either side to tackle the issue is South Kordofan Governor Ahmed Mohamed Haroun, an ICC-indictee for his involvement in the Darfur conflict. He continues active outreach to the Misseriya in an attempt to keep temperatures down. End Comment.)

¶7. (SBU) On November 5, Abyei Chief Administrator Arop Mayak Monytoc told CDA Whitehead that he has not received the budget promised by Khartoum. Since last January the Abyei Administration has received only six million Sudanese pounds (appx. USD 2,400,000),

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including an early November tranche of one million Sudanese pounds, barely enough to cover salaries and basic operating expenses.

¶8. (SBU) Comment. The demarcation team's problems are a sign and product of the greater political issues facing both Abyei and greater Sudan. With the Misseriya having begun their annual migration south into Abyei, boundary demarcation there is unlikely to move ahead in the near future and could be a catalyst to broader conflict. End Comment.

WHITEHEAD